



Naicker, Xuma, Dadoo

Three Doctors' Pact

"This Joint Meeting declares its sincerest conviction that for the future progress, goodwill, good race relations, and for the building of a united, greater and free South Africa, full franchise rights must be extended to all sections of the South African people..."

This second document in the fifth part of the CU NDR series is a transcript of the "Three Doctors' Pact" of March, 1947. It was a historic pact for democracy and for national liberation, as the above quotation from it shows.

The three doctors were Dr A B Xuma, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, and Dr Monty Naicker, leaders of the ANC, the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the Natal Indian Congress respectively [Picture: Dr Xuma signing; Dr Dadoo is seen on the right side of the picture, Dr Monty Naicker on the other side].

This Pact was a precursor of the Women's Charter of 1954 and

of the Freedom Charter of 1955, including the latter's volunteer campaign prior to the Congress of the People and its succeeding campaign of publication after the signing of the Freedom Charter.

The Pact declares *"the urgency of cooperation between the non-European peoples and other democratic forces."* It demanded *"Equal economic and industrial rights and opportunities and the recognition of African trade unions under the Industrial Conciliation Act."*

In other words, it goes beyond the immediate business of unity of African and Indian organisations, and quite explicitly leads the reader towards the grouping of democratic forces that was to be further developed into the Congress of the People eight years later, and into the product of that assembly: The Freedom Charter.

In all of these cases we can see that mass organisations of specific constituencies were able to combine as part of a process of national social development, and more precisely, towards a National Democratic Revolution.

This Doctors' Pact made a direct reference to the gains of the anti-fascist war, during which South Africa had been allied with the Soviet Union among others, as follows: *"every effort [must] be made to compel the Union Government to implement the United Nations' decisions and to treat the Non-European peoples in South Africa in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter."*

To this end the Pact determined that *“a vigorous campaign be immediately launched.”*

Reaction was closing in. The quasi-fascist and racist National Party was elected to a majority the all-white Parliament in the following year, 1948. The Communist Party of South Africa, later reborn as the clandestine South African Communist Party (SACP), and finally legalised again in 1990, was banned in 1950. The consequence of this banning was the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign when the ANC rallied to the defence of the Party, while the Trade Union Movement grew towards the foundation of SACTU in 1955, just in time for it to take part in the Congress of the People.

Many other diverse and historic events took place in the decade between the end of the anti-fascist world war in 1945 and the Congress of the People in 1955, but the general movement is clear: towards a National Democratic Revolution, based on the unity in action of the workers' Party, the united national liberation movement, and the organised mass trade union movement.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Three Doctors Pact, 1947, Xuma, Naicker, Dadoo](#).
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